

T H E

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Mournful Widow's GARLAND.



GOOD people now, both old and young
draw near,

And with attentive heed I pray give ear
To me, while I to you this thing make known,
Enough to peirce a heart tho' made of stone.

'Tis of a caulker, Charles Cox by name,
Who from the island of Jamaica came
Over to England, with his wife and children
dear

In Chatham he soon settled, as we hear.

The children that they brought with them
were three,

They had two since, who now living be;
The eldest of the five, as we are told,
He was a lad about fifteen years old.

The man was forced from his family
On board the fleet to serve his majesty;
And as they were opposing of proud Spain,
He and some other poor men were slain.

Doubtless most of them wives and children
had

Which dismal news no doubt made them sad,
And caus'd the tears from their eyes to run,
Crying, O dear! alas! we are undone.

Among them all, now I must notice take,
What moan this man's wife & children make
For loss of him who was their only stay
And staff of their true comfort night and day.

When the news came that her husband was
dead,

She said, If so, all joys from me are fled,
And I am left in tears with children five,
Knowing on earth I have no friend alive
For to support me in this dismal case;
The seas do part me from my native place:
Where can I comfort get in time of need!
What must I do my tender babes to feed!

Lord, thou know'st three of my babes are
small,

What shift now can I make to keep them all!
If I should steal, for that I should be blam'd,
And for to beg, alas! I am ashamed.

My eldest is a son, but for his share
For food and raiment he will take no care;
If I for comfort to the parish go,
Out of the town we shall be turn'd I know.

Thus making of her moan, in came her son
 Who she complain'd was such an idle one,
 He said, Mother, my father's dead I hear,
 But do not grieve, forbear to shed a tear.

I must confess that I have been stubborn,
 The which has caus'd you oftentimes to
 mourn;
 Tho' I have been so bad, yet you shall see
 I altogether now as good will be.

Dear mother, I will be a child to you
 For duty, and for care a husband too;
 So far as strength gives leave I'll strive indeed
 My mother and dear sisters for to feed.

For stubbornness, mother, I have had the
 name,

For which I know that many did me blame,
 But I will take much care now out of hand,
 To gain the love of God and praise of man.

When he spoke his mother wept for joy,
 To hear such words from him who was a boy,
 Admiring he, who had run such a race,
 Should thus consider his poor mother's case.

So presently he out for work did seek,
 And got a place of six shillings a week,
 With which money his mother, it is said,
 And sisters to their hearts content were fed.

But behold, there came a change at last,
 The which, alas, did all their comfort blast,

This hopeful youth was brought home sick
one day,

Which made their hopes vanish quite away.

We understand this sickness was to death,
He was the dearest child she had on earth;
Though young in years, he took great care
indeed,

To help his mother in the time of need.

As his mother was standing near his bed,
With sad weeping eyes sunk in her head,
He said, Dear mother, to weep pray refrain,
I hope the Lord will raise me up again

To be a help and comfort unto you:
Mother, I'll take such care, there are but few
Shall take the like, if please God *I* do live;
Therefore be of good heart, & do not grieve.

For several days he lay in grief and smart,
To comfort him she with some goods did
part,

At length this youth did change his tone, we
hear,

Saying, Now *I* must die, my mother dear.

If *I* die in my youth I'm not the first;
Pray, mother, do not providence distrust,
He that has power to shorten my days,
Is able to you a greater friend to raise.

I have not long to live *I* plainly see,
I am cut off in my mortality,

My sun will set long time before 'tis noon :
Oh, death, why dost thou take me off so
soon !

Pray, mother, bring my sisters unto me,
Mother, before *I* die *I* would them see.
With that she fetch'd them forth unto the
bed,

And hearing them he turn'd about his head.

He said, Sisters, from you *I* must away,
I in this world have not long to stay ;
I in few minutes more from you must part,
I find that death has seiz'd my tender heart.

Before *I* die this counsel *I* you give,
Pray honour my dear mother while you live,
And do not cause her aged eyes to flow,
But unto her a just obedience shew.

The next advice that *I* do give to you,
Learn your books, and mind your prayers
too,

And go not in the race which many run,
Lest you at last be utterly undone.

You see life is uncertain here on earth,
And that nothing more certain is than death:
Mind that you're good to your mother dear,
And when death comes, his dart you need
not fear.

Pray, mother, do not grieve, tho' in distress,
God will provide for the widow & fatherless,

Such are the objects of his love, he cried :
Then with a groan he turn'd himself & died.

He buried was, she for the same did pay,
To raise the sum she made her goods away,
And at the last was forc'd to sell her bed,
To buy herself & hungry babes some bread.

This being done, she got a bed of straw,
In which they lay ; but this poor woman saw
No hopes of comfort now before her eyes,
But her poor hungry babes making sad cries.

She said, Oh, cruel fate, why didst thee
Bring down this sad affliction upon me !
My sorrows are more than I can bear,
I fear they'll soon drive me into despair.

So this past on ; at length upon a day
She did design her children for to slay,
Beginning with the eldest of them ; who
Said, Mother, what do you intend to do ?

To kill you now. — Pray do not serve me
so,

Save but my life, I will a begging go
To get some food your hunger to suffice :
Hearing these words the tears fell from her
eyes.

Then out she went some succour for to get,
And as she then was going in the street,
A young sailor, who had good store of gold,
Seeing her beg, he did her then behold,

And seeing this young creature look so poor,

He followed her home to her own door;
And when that he beheld her woeful case,
With grief the tears did trickle down his face.

So then this woman did with tears impart
To him the cause of all her grief and smart:
Hearing her moan, this loving sailor he
Gave her a guinea out of charity.

He said, I'm grieved to see your sad condition,

I now for you will draw up a petition,
And take thy children along with thee,
And go with speed unto his majesty,

I will write at length the cause of all your woe,

And with you I unto the king will go,
Who is the only man, as I am sure,
That's now alive for to comfort the poor.

Hearing these words, she wept for joy indeed,

Then to the court away she went with speed,
And when the king heard her petition read,
Being of a tender heart, he shook his head.

He said, Bring the poor woman unto me,
That I may her and her poor children see.
They were brought & on their knees did fall,
The king pray'd to the Lord to bless 'em all.

He very earnestly did them behold,
 And threw them twenty pieces of broad gold,
 Saying that's to nourish thee and thine,
 And thou shalt be a pensioner of mine

Thy pension twenty pounds a year shall be,
 And once a year it shall be paid to thee ;
 So now arise, and while you live
 Unto your children, good instruction give,
 According unto your capacity.

This woman humbly thank'd his majesty,
 Praying to God for his long happy reign.
 Then she unto the sailor went again,

Returning many thanks. Said he,
 Give thanks to God, and not to me.
 So home she went, praising the Lord on high
 For sending friends in her extremity.

She said, I wish all people would take care
 And not in time of trouble so despair,
 But wait God's leisure ; for no doubt but he
 In his due time will surely set them free.

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Printed for S. GAMIDGE, at his Ware-
 house, Leech Street, Worcester.